

four States, pulverizing everything in its path.

From Kentucky, there were reports of objects being lifted 30,000 feet in the air by the force of the tornado. Treasured family photos were found 100 miles away. Sadly, at least 80 people have lost their lives in Kentucky.

In Illinois, we have also suffered staggering losses. Four tornadoes tore across our State between 7:30 and 10 last Friday. The greatest devastation was in Edwardsville, IL, Madison County, where a powerful tornado with winds up to 155 miles an hour peeled the roof off a massive Amazon distribution facility about 9 o'clock. I know the facility. I have been there.

Massive concrete walls 11 inches thick and 40 feet high caved in, trapping employees who were working to fill Christmas and holiday orders. Fire and rescue crews from at least 20 communities rushed to the scene. More than 45 workers managed to escape from that mountain of rubble, but 6 workers died when the warehouse collapsed. The oldest was 62; the youngest was 26. Thirty more workers were hurt. One is still hospitalized with critical injuries.

I know I speak for millions of Americans when I say that our hearts go out to all those who perished in Friday's tornadoes and to those they left behind.

I thank President Biden for responding quickly. Yesterday, our Governor, JB Pritzker, requested an emergency declaration, and of course we joined him. The President issued the emergency order just a few hours after that request. This assistance will help our State immediately, but there is more to do. Our thanks to the Red Cross and so many volunteers, local residents in communities across Illinois, for pitching in to help the victims. Supplementing that fine work are volunteers who have come to help in any way they can.

It was ironic that last week I had a coffee for a man named Jose Andres. Jose Andres is well known by many across the country for his extraordinary efforts to feed hungry people. Last Tuesday, he spoke to us, a few members of our caucus, about his non-profit organization, the World Central Kitchen. They have come to the rescue of people in need in Puerto Rico and Haiti and all across the United States and around the world.

Today, World Central Kitchen is on the ground in Mayfield, KY, where the tornadoes struck last Friday, providing hot food to the victims. It is a time when America, a divided nation, actually sees our Nation coming together.

The tornadoes didn't distinguish between red States and blue States, between Trump supporters and Biden supporters, and it is my great hope that the Senate will also put aside its politics for a few moments and stand together to help the victims.

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Mr. President, on a related matter, while we cannot say that last week's

killer tornadoes were directly related to climate change, there is no doubt among scientists that climate change is making the world's weather patterns more volatile and destructive.

How many times in the past year have Members of this Senate come to the floor to respond to a once-in-a-century heat wave or a once-in-a-century storm that has hit their home State? I will just say, for tornadoes, you can't be a kid growing up in the Midwest, as I was, and not know about tornadoes—how many times in the middle of the summer we were roused from our bed as the sirens went off, and Mom would take us down to the basement, a safe place, until the storm would blow over. That was a summer phenomena.

I just have to remind you that we just went through a December tornado in that same area—unheard of in years gone by.

Over the summer, the Pacific Northwest burned in the worst heat wave on record; there were droughts in Western States; a polar vortex knocked a Texas power grid offline. Each of these deadly and disastrous weather events are related to the next, and it is fair warning to all of us that what is happening to the climate in the United States is happening around the world.

Just yesterday, scientists warned that a glacier the size of Florida is at risk of splitting apart in the next few years, causing catastrophic rise in sea levels that could threaten the millions of people living in coastal areas.

When we talk about Build Back Better, the reconciliation bill, and that part of the bill that is focused on environmental resilience, being ready to protect ourselves and to bounce back, if necessary, when extreme weather hits, it is the topic in this morning's newspaper, and it will be in tomorrow's as well.

We ought to be coming together and finally putting aside our political differences and realize that climate change is the threat to us now and an even greater threat to our children and grandchildren.

Last week, I received a letter from one of the small business owners in our area, Dr. Dane Glueck. A few years ago, he started a company called StraightUp Solar, developing solar energy systems for homes and businesses in my State of Illinois and Missouri.

He wrote and he said: "Solar is a job-creator, and the long-term tax incentives in the Build Back Better Act for solar, storage, and domestic manufacturing will put us on a path to decarbonize the electric grid, reach the President's 2035 clean energy target, and create hundreds of thousands of quality career opportunities in every community."

Today, Dr. Glueck employs almost 100 people throughout the Midwest, but with investments in the Build Back Better Act, the reconciliation bill, he is going to expand operation and hire more workers. Let's give him the incentive that he needs.

I heard the Senator from Kentucky, the Republican leader, coming to the floor, and, once again, he is critical of this whole effort. I wish he would stop and reflect on the fact that our incentives to move in the right direction on the environment really are an important part of the conversation we should have after the devastation last Friday in his State and mine and across the Midwest.

It is time to transform our environmental crisis into an economic catalyst.

INSULIN

Mr. President, it turns out it is an anniversary, just this month. You see, in 1921, 100 years ago, a Canadian scientist named Frederick Banting discovered insulin. He sold the patent for this discovery to the University of Toronto for \$1. He declared that this life-saving drug didn't belong to him: "It belongs to the world."

He wasn't the only unselfish scientist I can remember. I remember, as a kid, our fear of polio, and along came Dr. Jonas Salk—bless his soul—who discovered the vaccine that we needed to protect ourselves. There was no great political debate. People weren't threatening lawsuits. My mom and dad said: Line up and roll up your sleeve, kid; we are going to do what needs to be done to protect you from polio.

Dr. Jonas Salk gave away the patent to that drug as well. It was a different era, perhaps, when insulin was discovered or the polio vaccine, but we should reflect on the state of play today of that drug, insulin.

One hundred years later, there are 8.4 million diabetics in the United States who rely on insulin. They have to pay—many of them—an exorbitant amount of money for a drug that supposedly belongs to them, according to its discoverer.

As the cost of insulin has risen, average list prices increased 40 percent for insulin between 2014 and 2018.

I am quoting from an article in today's USA Today by Katie Wedell.

Patients and their families shell out hundreds of dollars a month even if they have good insurance.

Rod Regalado is a father of a teen with type 1 diabetes. Do you know what he calls the insulin pricing system? Legal extortion.

This article tells the story of what he went through. He had never heard of a pharmacy benefit manager before 2 years ago, but it was 2 years ago that his son Matt, then 14 years old, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, and Mr. Regalado got a crash course in insulin pricing in America today.

His first trip to the pharmacy when his son was released from a hospital came with a \$1,000 price tag for all the testing supplies and insulin he'd never purchased before. The next month, when all he had to do was buy more insulin, the price was still north of \$400 after insurance.

The single dad of two said he thought he had good insurance until he found himself having to redo his entire household budget to afford the insulin to keep his son alive.